

# LIMERICK SOCIALIST

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THE  
VOICE  
OF THE  
WORKER

That which is good for the working class I esteem patriotic

"James Connolly"



## MAYOR GEORGE EDWARD RUSSELL

"A SMILE LIKE THE GLINT OF  
MOONLIGHT ON THE SILVER  
PLATE OF A COFFIN".



## THE WILD GOOSE CHASE

Sean Bourke



Patrick Sarsfield

# Banks, Bishops and Boland's Mills

BY DERMOT MCEVOY

THE BANK strike may well be over by the time you read these notes and the people who use banks either to borrow money at usurious rates or to deposit money at minimal rates back in business. But strike-on or strike-off, our T.D.'s and Senators will be enjoying their holidays – until mid-October – and spreading sweetness and light on some Costa Packet or other: in this crisis and it is a crisis for everyone, especially for G.K. Chesterton's 'unmoneyed men', the ship of state is rudderless, drifting to the rocks. But raise your voice in protest and some Minister or Bishop will, to mix our metaphors, come down from the Hildebrandine heights of mediaeval theology like a commercial traveller from Mount Sinai and pronounce: "You're a Red!"

Before we come to the bank clerks, let us take a brief look at the banks. They're positively bulging with money; their statements are my favourite reading and these show them with scores of millions in the black. The most recent example of what they do with this surplus is Allied Irish Investment Bank's financing of the takeover of Boland's Mills (shades of 1916!) by the insignificant Barrow Milling. Did this bake an extra loaf, provide just one more job? Not at all; what it did do was provide the lucky holders of Boland's shares with 46p apiece for shares that were languishing at 17p. Someone made millions without getting as much as a dusting of flour on his mohair suit, but when the price of bread and cakes goes up in due course you and your children, as necessary consumers of milled products, will be paying back those millions of pounds involved (plus interest) to AIIB. The bankers, the brokers, the shareholders who got 46p, will, of course, be able to afford the new price of bread, even of cake with cream and a cherry on top. But that is the capitalist system and you're a Red if you say it is robbery of the many to enable the few to live in luxury. I do not know if any of our Bishops condemn this business, this *legerdemain* with share certificates; all I know is that they have not made any public pronouncement about it and they do read the newspapers.

Another aspect of banking is that it favours the rich against the less rich: If you're rich enough to have £25,000, or £10,000 on deposit you get a higher rate of interest than the man who has only a £1,000 nest-egg. I'd have thought that the man with only £1,000 would be much more likely to *need* the extra interest, even to deserve it as a reward for his thrift. But that's not the way things are done in the capitalist Republic of Ireland which has adopted, holus-bolus, the way things are done under the filthy, dirty, pagan British that we, the Irish, thank God and thank Him again!, kicked out of our holy Catholic country. Pause now and ask yourself was all this fighting for 'freedom' worth while.

Let us now take a look at the bank clerks. Not a few of them have been going round saying the banks have oodles of money and they should very reasonably share it with their staffs. Too simple; the banks should first of all reduce their rate of interest to borrowers, especially to hard-pressed industry and private citizens, and encourage the small depositor by giving him a better rate of interest. First things first; it is the banks' customers rather than the clerks who provide the bulging profits in the first instance. Moreover, I don't think bank clerks have a first claim on the public bounty when it comes to wages.

Consider the men and women who wield pens at Limerick railway station, at the rates office, or in any of Alf Hogan's smoke-filled dens. They are CLERKS, but the people who do the same things (for shorter hours, infinitely better pensions and 3 per cent house-purchase loans) at Allied Irish Banks or the Bank of Ireland are by no means clerks; they are, mark it! BANK OFFICIALS. (The bank porter is not, of course, a bank official; he is a lesser breed, a working man). Hence the Irish Bank Officials Association as distinct from the Railway Clerks Association (for the record, Michael McInerney and I were paid-up members once of the RCA) and the IBOA is much too

grand to affiliate to the Irish Congress of Trades Unions.

True, bank clerks don't wear plus-fours any more but they still claim to be some sort of elite. They are reasonably well paid and, if they are to get more money, they should consider becoming trade unionists; they might also keep the shop open at lunchtime and on Saturday mornings when the customers who pay their wages are most in need of their services. They can arrange their lunch-hour the same way as bus-drivers have to, or else these bank clerks should come out in support of bus-drivers and everyone else stopping for lunch. Think that one over!

Banks, of course, should be nationalised; their clerks and porters should be paid commensurate to the services they render the community. This would certainly be less than the wages of a carpenter, plumber, bricklayer, baker, teacher, or roadsweeper – the really useful members of the community. To help bank clerks get rid of their snobbishness and incidentally earn a little extra pocket money they could do a bit of caddying on municipal golf courses or wash-up in workers' canteens. (I've done these things myself; there is nothing very demeaning about them; indeed they heighten by contrast to one's leisure-time enjoyment of the music of Monteverdi, the Memoirs of the Duc de Saint-Simon, and, of course, the Lamentations of Jeremiah. But, *chacun a son gout*, as the dog said when he licked his own arse).

Of course, the snobbery and the demand for more and more money arises in part from the banks' own attitudes to their clerks: banks paid – and still pay – their clerks' golf and tennis club fees; insist that they put up at the local Royal hotel rather than lodge with Mrs. Fitz. (Indeed, they used to have their clerks drinking bottled stout in hotels rather than pints in sawdust bars). So over the years the 'upper class' image was developed and you had the local tax-swindling grocer or draper boasting that his downright stupid, plummy-voiced daughter who could just about play *Over the Waves* on the piano had married A BANKER! I shall not repeat what pukka bankers like the Morgans, the Grenfells and the Montagus think of these jumped-up cheque changers ('How would you like it, Mrs. Murphy?!'). Bankers, how-are-ye!

But it is all part of life in the new Republic where, to paraphrase John Bossidy, bishops speak only with bankers and bankers speak only with God. You have the Taoiseach of All the Irish People booted and spurred sipping stirrup-cups and chasing unfortunate stags; Haughey in a pink coat (not red you moron!) tallyho-ing after foxes; Lynch taking tea with Mothers-Superior ('That Cruise O'Brien's a Red and – an Unbeliever!'); O'Malley passing water in Jury's £15,000 electronic lavatory, and bank clerks, sorry bank officials, being real devils and doubling three-no-trumps after (free) Camparis-and-soda with ma-in-law-to-be in the pergolas of Castletroy. Just reflect that Irishmen fought and died for this Republic of all the Gombeen Men: at Knocklong, at Rineen, with Tom Barry in West Cork, with O'Duffy's 3rd Northern Brigade, with the Blacksmith of Ballinalee. (Hamar Greenwood where are you now when we need you?)

What the common people have got after centuries of struggle, famine and the emigrant ship are new masters who brandish insolence as a credential, a conceited, sneering crew of uncaring jacks-in-office. The value of the achievement? I'd say it is all about worth the cost of cleaning and pressing Major Jimmy McInerney's new green uniform, the one with the gold shamrocks, that was spoiled in the rain on Easter Monday 1916. Just about.

According to St. Augustine – and clerical readers will agree there is no better name to invoke when one is discussing

political sin — “the seat of mind is in memory”. If Augustine was right, the nation is now mindless, and we shall have to find such comfort as we can in the hope that when mind goes, habit and instinct may still remain, assuring life if not direction. Surely the most striking aspect of the present political scene is the absence of the recent past from it. There seems to be a tacit agreement among the political contenders, and between them and the public, that the record of recent events has no bearing on our present condition or future prospects.

It is just no use Corbally dismissing Joseph-Pierre Proudhon (“All property is theft”) without, say, commenting on the Case of Boland’s Mills. Was *that* theft? Are the banks’ bulging millions theft?

\* \* \* \* \*

ALTOGETHER, it is difficult to think of an age in which unselfishness, devotion to an ideal, faithfulness to a master or friend were rarer in public life, or one in which lust for material gain was greater. One is inclined often to throw in one’s hand, to join the rats and the rat-race, but we sustain each other: Billy Leonard in Brooklyn sustains me; he fights the good fight for blacks and rackrented tenants: Arthur La Bern in London, the distinguished novelist, battling against a deadline, takes time out to write for the *Limerick Socialist* this month. Jim Kemmy keeps fighting for the underdog against the criminal negligence of all the party hacks and placemen. (And I don’t mind admitting that I was more than pleasantly surprised last month when Jim, selling the L.S., handed a copy to a customer in a pub in O’Connell Street. The customer, a stranger to me, grabbed it, saying as he turned it over, ‘Don’t mind the history of Limerick, I want to see what McEvoy has to say this month!). We’re all one and we’re all in this together. Let me remind myself and you of what Andre Gide wrote in 1897, in *Fruits of the Earth*:

Work and strive and accept no evil that you might change. Keep saying to yourself ‘It lies with me! . . . Comrades, do not accept the life that is offered to you by men. Never cease to be convinced that life might be better — your own and others’; not a future life that might console us for the present one and help us to accept its misery, but this one of ours do not accept . . . Most of our ills have nothing inevitable or necessary about them and are due only to ourselves, as for those we cannot avoid, if there are diseases, there are also remedies.

Remedies? Screw your courage to the sticking point and stick: don’t be just polite when the gangsters and their minions come seeking your vote, say ‘not bloody likely’ and set the Kerry Blue at ‘em. The end result is not the only consideration; you’ve done *your* best and that’s what counts. You can then look at yourself in the mirror without shame and hold your head high. Give the bastards no quarter. And I may be able to lend you a Kerry Blue!

RECENTLY I invited Dr. Newman and the Bishops of Ireland to limit their adventures into the public prints on the subjects of contraception and divorce and to try dealing with the less sophisticated tensions in our society like jobs for school-leavers. Well, Dr. Newman still stays in the Hildebrandine heights of mediaeval theology but some of the Irish Hierarchy has got round to mentioning unemployment. Something must be done, they say, but they don’t say what. While they insist on their right to make political statements, they ought to say what, and how, and where. Seeing how dreadfully effective the Hierarchy was in getting Noel Browne’s Mother and Child Scheme dropped, why not *order* Cosgrave, Corish & Co. under threat of Excommunication to *do* something about jobs?

The money? Well, what’s wrong with an immediate swingeing Wealth Tax of 100 per cent on all fortunes over £50,000 and a 100 per cent Income Tax on all incomes over £100 a week? Most people could manage in this emergency of young lives on £50,000 and £100 a week? If there’s anything immoral in that, Dr. Newman should send me to Maynooth for

a course in Moral Theology and I’d willingly go. The bishops should speak up loud and clear: it was Excommunication and the moral effect of the winged words of Hildebrand (later to be Pope Gregory VII) that brought the Emperor Henry IV humbly to Canossa. *Cosgrave is no Henry IV but have we a Hildebrand at Corbally?* God knows I think that a down-to-earth like E.T. O’Dwyer, the bishop that was squashed out of a curate’, is the man we need. That shows how desperate I am, how terrible is the plight of my comrades.

Let Dr. Newman take courage from the example of the Bishop of Bilbao. A year ago, the Bishop preached a sermon calling for more freedom for the Basques. Next morning, the chief of police told the Bishop he was being expelled to Rome, that a military aircraft was waiting to fly him there, and that some policemen would be around shortly to help the Bishop to pack. The Bishop said to the chief of police: “How would you like to be excommunicated?” That was the end of the affair.

\* \* \* \* \*

DON’T think I have no sympathy for the rich. Life’s whirligig has brought me quite often into happy contact and friendship with people whose names are redolent of wealth. They fidget a great deal and worry about Kruger-rands, those handsome South Africa coins that contain 1oz. Troy of pure gold; their burglary insurance — have I forgotten to renew? — is always a problem. Now, I regret to say I’ve added to the problems of a rich Londoner, a Peer of the Realm. He always flies First Class, a roomy lounge with fresh fruit and a stewardess who is prompt with the drinks and snacks. I told him how dreadful it was that First Class passengers had to hang around at airports waiting for their luggage, just as long, often longer, than common, tourist-class persons, that First Class luggage should be specially marked and loaded last on to the aircraft so that it would off-loaded first. A simple thing, yet no airline does it. I left milord spluttering; he’s going to see to it. He did not quite appreciate my valedictory, “Of course, it’s surer to have your own executive jet; that way even your second chauffeur won’t have to hang around the airport”.

YOU DON’T think that’s important? Nonsense. When you have real money the object of the exercise is to have *everything* running smoothly: would you have milord putting ads. in the *Leader* announcing that he was beholden to St. Jude for favours received? It’s St. Jude who should be putting the ads. in for favours done to him!

## LIMERICKS

Little Richie thinks it so odd  
That employment for all is a cod.  
“Why is it that jobs”,  
He so bitterly sobs,  
“Were never created by God?”

Our eminent Taoiseach called Bill  
Was afraid, when opposing the Pill,  
That an erosion of gender  
Would very soon render  
His investment in baby-food nil.

A government dude called O’Leary  
Is shattered and thoroughly weary.  
And it isn’t debate  
That has ruined him of late,  
But debts crying, “Kiss me, dearie!”

# MAYOR GEORGE

On June 28th, Senator George Edward Russell, the Fine Gael Alderman, became Mayor of Limerick for the fifth time. His election caused little surprise, as the result had long been a foregone conclusion because of the Fine Gael/Labour coalition pact on the City Council.

Russell was born on the 9th April 1912, the son of Matthew John and Mary Russell. His father and grandfather were well-known bakery owners. The Russells were a leading "Castle Catholic" family in Limerick. It is also widely accepted that Russell was christened "George Edward" by his father as a gesture of respect and loyalty to the then reigning monarch of the same Christian names.

Donogh O'Malley, Russell's Fianna Fail opponent and a member of another prominent Limerick family took a keen interest in the origins of these first names. John ("Backbencher") Healy served as O'Malley's public relations man for several years. Healy had been well primed by O'Malley when, in his "Backbencher" column, on the 27th June 1964, he gave this account of Russell and his family background.

*Mr. Russell . . . is popularly called "Ted", satirically called "Rex" because he was christened, with all pomp and regality, "George Edward" by a grateful father who thus acknowledged his fealty reigning monarch, George Edward of England and the dominions beyond the seas, then Emperor of India and defender of the faith, whose Limerick garrison on and off shore was provisioned by Russell Pere . . . Mr. Russell, despite the handicap of his father's christening, is a man of many parts and parties . . . Mr. Russell progressed himself . . . to Clann na Poblachta, which was a long way from the spirit of his alma mater, Stoneyhurst and the crowded winter afternoons of "Feet, College, feet". And how ill-weaned were the shrinking ambitions of a loving father when George Edward became for a time a very republican, Seoirse Eamonn, follower of Sean McBride.*

In a letter to the *Irish Times*, on July 4th, 1964, Russell disagreed with many of the points made in the article and claimed that "Backbencher" had been "misinformed".

Ted Russell was, thus, born into a wealthy and privileged family. Early in his education he became a Jesuit boy and went on to complete his education with that Order. His father, who was notorious, in his time, for his implacable attitude to trade unions and workers' rights, instilled in Ted and his younger brother, Harry, a sharp appreciation of how to make

money.

Russell received his formative education at the Crescent College, Limerick. He then went on to Mount St. Benedict's College in Co. Wexford. He finished his education at Stonyhurst College in England, a top Jesuit institution catering for "upper crust" Catholics.

During this period, Limerick workers and their children suffered badly from unemployment, low wages and poverty. Workers' children were lucky to receive even the rudiments of an education. Most of these left school at about twelve years of age and were fortunate even to find work as messenger boys. Matt Russell employed many messenger boys, and one such boy is still alive today. John Joe McNamara, often recalls how, after having worked over sixty hours for a few shillings, he was forced to spend his weekly "half-days" plucking the fur from Angora rabbits and taking "Master Ted" and "Master Harry" for rides on the back of a donkey.

After the completion of his education at Stonyhurst, Ted Russell entered the family business. He got married to Dervilia Gleeson in 1938. In the local elections of August 1942 Russell was a candidate and was elected as an Independent. His failure to choose membership of one of the three leading political parties of that time, Fianna Fail, Fine Gael and the Progressive Party, was to be a decisive factor in his future political career. Russell made a further political mistake when he subsequently joined the newly-formed Clann na Poblachta party. He contested the 1948 general election for the Clann but was defeated. It is not generally known that Sean South worked and spoke on behalf of Russell in that campaign.

Russell's period in Clann na Poblachta was not a happy one. He fought a long and losing battle with Steve Coughlan for control of the local party machine. Russell's cold and aloof manner did not help his political advancement. One inebriated member of Clann na Poblachta, at a boisterous party function, summed up a perennial problem for successive generations of Limerick people when in frustration, he told the haughty Russell: "I don't know whether to call you Mr. Russell or Ted!". This uneasy choice still remains an unresolved dilemma for many people. It also does much to explain Russell's failure to win enough support to hold down a Dail seat.

Russell's appearance and manner have always been major obstacles to general popularity. His appearance has been

## RUSSELL'S INTERESTS

Silvermines Limited: Chairman of the Board; Managing Director of Dan O'Connor Ltd.

Director: Silvermines Ltd, Silvermines Investment Ltd; Greenhills Mining Co. Ltd.; Russell Investments Ltd; National Rusks Ltd; Allied Bakery Company Ltd; Shield Insurance Co. Ltd.; Limerick Dairies Ltd. and Mogul of Ireland Ltd.

Director: Ferenka Limited since 1975.

Extract from Silvermines Annual Report 1974:

100% subsidiaries of Silvermines; Silvermines Investments Ltd – an investment dealing company; Greenhills Mining Co. – mining company; Shalee Holdings – investment holding company; Keeper Investments – investment holding company; Garryroe Holdings – property holding company; Garryard Holdings – property holding company.

Associated companies:

Mogul of Ireland – Mining company – 25% interest; Aran Energy – Oil and gas exploration and development Company – 50% interest.

Unquoted Investments:

Gannet Offshore Production Services (Supply of high technology services to the oil industry) 5.5% interest (Russell joined the Board in 1974); Petroleum Royalties of Ireland Ltd. – which owns 42.7% of Marathon royalties; Celtic Oil – an investment of £5,250; Irish Offshore Oil Ltd. – investment of £5,000.

Seven thousand shareholders in Silvermines:

Russell's stake 31.12.74: 53,724 2½p. shares (total of 18,000,000 2½p shares in Silvermines, of which 8,420,527 have been taken up).

44 WKS TO REMAIN? The Civic Chain – Michael Hogan

# EDWARD RUSSELL

likened to that of a frustrated daffodil, while his smile has been described as being "like the glint of moonlight on the silver plate of a coffin".

Russell served with the L.D.F. during the "Emergency". By the early fifties he had become a leading figure in the Limerick business world. With the help of his brother Harry, he began to expand the family's trading interests. While Ted remained the "brain" behind these moves, he always believed in "cloaking the dagger" in his dealings with workers and trade unions. Harry inherited much of his father's blunt manner and soon became the firm's hatchet-man. His name became a byword in Limerick labour relations and his hostility to trade unions became legendary.

Many famous stories are told about Harry's attitudes to workers. It is ironic that one of the best *raconteurs* on this topic is Frank Prendergast, who was secretary of the local branch of the bakers' union and who is now a Labour Party coalition colleague of Ted Russell on the City Council.

One story tells how "Honest" John Casey, of the Sandmall, spent over fifty years in the employment of the Russells as a breadvan driver. His job was a tough one, driving a horse and cart around in all kinds of weather. He was never known to be even a penny short in his half-century of work. However, when the time came for his retirement in the early 'fifties, he got no pension, financial "handshake or even a word of thanks. A deputation of workers, including bakers and Pa O'Connell, the Fianna Fail Councillor, approached Harry about giving some kind of pension to "Honest" John. The indignant Russell replied: "He got his thanks in his pay-packet every week".

After Steve Coughlan had out-maneuvred Ted Russell inside Clann na Poblachta, George Edward became to look

around for greener political pastures. He became an Independent and as such won a Dail seat in 1957. Coughlan also shifted parties and, as a Labour candidate, succeeded in ousting Russell in the 1961 general election. After a further period in the political wilderness Russell made another move; he finally found his true home in the party of privilege and property – Fine Gael.

But by this time, however, the young Tom O'Donnell had got a stranglehold on the Fine Gael seat in East Limerick, and, once again, Russell was forced to play second fiddle. After yet another general election defeat, he became a Senator in 1969.

Many people have asked why Russell, at the ripe age of sixty-four, should want to become Mayor of Limerick for the fifth time. Ambition is his spur. Russell has always secretly hoped to become Minister for Industry and Commerce in a Coalition Government. And, with the fourth Dail seat again "up for grabs" at the forthcoming general election, his unrequited hopes have quickened.

So, at a time when his business interests have mushroomed and prospered, Russell faces the last political test of his long career. He has successfully moved into mining and oil and his millionaire's money will not be spared in the quest for that elusive Dail seat. But it seems that his biggest ambition is destined to remain unfulfilled. His early political indecision, his delayed membership of Fine Gael and his frosty appearance will prove too big a handicap. Russell, described by Jim Kemmy as one of the most conscious and articulate members of his class – capitalist class – in the last thirty years of Limerick political life, will have to be content with his present role of Government prompter rather than Minister.

## The £100 cheque

We have all heard about "the hand that shook the hand of John L. Sullivan". But have you heard the one about the Limerick Dail deputy who got a £100 cheque for canvassing with Senator Brendan Halligan in the recent Dublin South-West by-election?

Already the cheque has become a prized specimen in the political annals of South's Bar, in Quinlan Street. The first news of the existence of the document broke on Saturday July 3rd. Steve Coughlan and two of his cronies had gathered for the announcement. On the same day a crucial vote was being held by the Irish Congress of Trade Unions on the proposed National Wage Agreement. But that day the well lubricated Steve was in no condition for worrying about such mundane, everyday affairs. He had The Cheque.

As the drink and talk flowed, a brief lull occurred in the conversation. Suddenly, Stevie whipped a piece of paper from his pocket and shouted loudly: "This is a cheque for £100 given to me by Brendan Halligan for my work in canvassing for him in Dublin South-West. Here, take a good look at it. I got it in appreciation of my work in Ballyfermot. I knocked at the door and went into the kitchens to chat-up the ould wans to get them to vote for Halligan".

With a show of elation, Coughlan began to fiercely brandish the cheque in all directions. One of Steve's companions began to get a bit worried at this display and advised: "Put that away, Stevie". But the exuberant Coughlan was in no mood for caution. "What do you mean", he replied. "I have no

intention of cashing it. This is a souvenir".

Steve went back to his whiskey and the talk drifted to Thady. "They'll all vote for Thady", said one of the men. "We'll get him in alright", rejoined Coughlan. The other man said nothing. Steve quickly turned on him and said: "I did you a good turn one time". The man looked uneasy and continued his silence.

After a while the cheque came out again for a repeat performance. The National Wage Agreement vote, Dublin South-West and the Socialist Seventies were a million miles away amid the whiskey and the tomfoolery. Only one question remains to be answered: How many £100 cheques did Halligan give to the ordinary Labour party workers who slogged their guts out for his election success? But then, back-handers seldom travel that far.

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LETTER TO  
THE EDITOR

# DR. THORNLEY WRITES .....

In your last issue you make reference to my present predicament vis-a-vis the Courts in Ireland as a result of my participation in the banned Provisional Sinn Fein march on Sunday, 25th April. You draw attention to two points.

The first is my disappointment that Deputy Coughlan did not vote in my favour at the Party meeting — in this you are correct. While my friendship with Mr. Coughlan remains undiminished, I was disappointed at the vote he registered on that occasion. I have, however, no regrets that I voted against his expulsion from the Labour Party at the time of the celebrated row when he made certain alleged remarks about the conduct of Jews in Limerick. My attitude has always been that the Labour Party is large enough to contain widely disparate elements and on the same grounds I opposed the expulsion of the young man who shouted at the same Conference that I should send for my rosary beads. I feel that I have been wholly consistent in this matter.

Second, you advert to my excessive drinking. I think this is

an impertinence on your part because my private habits, except in so far as they impair my conduct as a socialist deputy, are my own business and my ability to drink too much when I am going through moods of depression is something of which I have never made a secret.

I have been a subscriber to your paper since its inception and intend to continue so. While I do not agree with everything your paper says, I feel that it serves a useful function in ventilating a particular socialist point of view. In some cases, as in your articles on the Limerick Soviet, it has, in fact, made a significant contribution towards original historical scholarship in Ireland. I regret all the more that you should descend from your normally high levels to indulge in a piece of invective about my private life which is worthy of the *News Of The World* and about as relevant to my career as a politician as the celebrated issue whether Mr. Jeremy Thorpe is homosexual or heterosexual.

David Thornley, T.D.

# ..... THE SOCIALIST ANSWERS

David Thornley states that he has no regrets about his support for Deputy S. Coughlan after the latter had justified the 1904 pogrom in Limerick and had called the Jews "bloodsuckers" and "extortionists". It is difficult to understand how any socialist or, indeed, even a member of the Labour Party could in any way condone the persecution and ultimate expulsion of almost the entire Jewish community from Limerick. In 1970, when the latest controversy about the affair took place, Dr. Thornley, despite his competence as a historian, made no attempt to point out the inaccuracy and basic unfairness of Coughlan's certain "alleged" remarks. Dr. Thornley is certainly "wholly consistent" in avoiding this fundamental issue.

On the question of Dr. Thornley and alcohol the "Limerick Socialist" agrees with his statement that his "private habits, except in so far as they impair my conduct as a socialist deputy, are my own business". However, it is clear from the tone of his letter that he has badly over-reacted to the comparatively mild reference to his drinking habits. The brief statement in our May article merely noted: "He began to spend more time in the Dail bar and began to drink more than was good for him". For a robust politician such as David Thornley to complain about this particular reference and to describe it as "a piece of invective" shows a degree of sensitivity not usually associated with the man.

The point of this reference was, in fact, that some of Dr. Thornley's habits had already impaired his work as a socialist deputy and was not made to invade his privacy. To use his own words, he has "never made a secret" of his drinking excesses. In an interview with Dick Walsh, published in the "Irish Times" on May 8th, Dr. Thornley himself is far more forthright than anything contained in the "Limerick Socialist" article. He stated: "When I get very depressed, I drink too much. When I voted for the Criminal Law (Jurisdiction) Bill I went on the batten for a fortnight". It is certain that his service to his constituents suffers during such periods — the central point of the "Limerick Socialist" article. It is significant that Dr. Thornley has failed to reply to this charge.

David Thornley does not appear to have been as squeamish about other articles published at the time of his appearance on the Provo platform. For instance, Michael Mills, writing in the "Irish Press", on April 29th, commented:

*His display of religious medals to journalists after his nomination as Labour member to answer the "Red" smear against Labour candidates in the 1969 general election was spontaneously innocent . . . Some of his friends would have preferred if he had never entered active politics, but maintained his role as an independent commentator and university lecturer, where his influence might have continued*

*to be much greater than has been possible within a political party, One of his friends advised him on the first night he occupied a seat in the Dail that the quality that the quality required above all else in Leinster House was not intelligence, but sheer stamina.*

Another writer, Tom Bates, in "Comment", stated:

*We all know that Thornley is a liar when he says he hates the Provos and was in O'Connell Street to defend the right of free speech. But there is a genuine problem. Democrats want to maintain free speech, even for their opponents. So how do we deal with armed conspiracy? Must we wait passively while the I.R.A. organise to supersede the Dail? There is as much future for a political system which does that as there is for a dog with no teeth . . . Democrats must be realistic about defending the institutions of democracy, and there is no simple formula to use. Every case must be taken on its merits. The Provo march was a danger, not because of what was said at it, but because this is the Provo type of recruiting campaign . . . They don't want voters; they want soldiers. Only a lunatic would join an army with no strength. A show of force was needed. The march had nothing to do with arming to impose an opinion on an unwilling people . . . They are fighting a real war in the North and are too shrewd to open a second front when there is no need for it . . . The method is direct: they are fighting the war themselves from a Southern base. That is the reality behind Thornley's precious soul. That is how much it concerns basic freedoms.*

The editorial in the May edition of the "Irish Communist" stated:

*Marx made a famous statement that "all historical personages occur, as it were, twice: the first time as tragedy, the second time as farce". Connolly too, had his reincarnation, and his has been more farcical than most. On the Provo platform . . . contemptuously slotted at the back, not invited to speak, set up as a guinea pig for the police, sat Connolly in the person of that well-known socialist republican, the man who does and doesn't support the Provos, who paraded his soul in the papers before the Jurisdiction Bill to tell the world of the clash between career and conscience, and eventually voted with the Government, but who finally put his miserable sinecure on the line — the pathetic David Thornley.*

Dr. Thornley is generous in his praise of some of the work of the "Limerick Socialist" and his kind remarks are appreciated. But on the question of his ambiguous but consistent support for the Provos there can be no middle course. It is on this matter — and not about private habits — that the "Limerick Socialist" takes issue with David Thornley.

# THE WILD GOOSE CHASE

BY SEAN BOURKE

Senator G.E. Russell, the well-known philanthropic cake-maker, was complaining recently in the papers about acts of political sabotage and vandalism perpetrated against his party by certain members of their Civil War enemies, Fianna Fail. (Yes, it WAS over fifty years ago, but they're still at it!).

It seems that Fine Gael were about to have their annual church-gate collection at Our Lady of the Holy Rosary Church in the exclusive North Circular Road when the "Green Tories" decided to upstage them. The Fianna Fail boys, well practised in confidence trickery, pasted their own propaganda posters on the electric light poles in the vicinity of the church the night before! Bad form, that! And, as Confectioner Russell said, "unprecedented".

No self-respecting *Socialist* worthy of the name would of course, ever indulge in such a tasteless display of bad manners. But then, even if he wanted to, he probably wouldn't know where the North Circular Road was. Or the Holy Rosary Church.

An interesting aspect of this parochial affair is the actual title of the Fianna Fail Cumann ("Club" to you and me) involved in the vandalism. It is called: The Sarsfield Cumann of Fianna Fail. This particular Green Tory Club was formed under the personal supervision of Donogh ("The Godfather") O'Malley. And very appropriate, and very much in character, was the name he chose. After all, Sarsfield was a man after his own heart. He, too, was prepared to fight valiantly to preserve his power and privilege and property — to the last drop of the workers' blood.

One wonders, though, if O'Malley and his fellow TAC-men took any account of the present-day standard bearers of the Sarsfield legend, before making their covetous choice. Patrick Sarsfield was created Earl of Lucan, Viscount Tully, and Baron of Rosberry, by King James II in February 1691, for valuable services to James's cause. He came of "good blood" on both sides; Norman on the father's side and best Gaelic strain on that of his mother. (The Sarsfields came over with Henry II and settled in the Pale. Thos. de Sarsfield was Henry II's standard bearer in 1172).

We all know about Sarsfield's exploits in the Siege of Limerick where he met his "Watergate" (sorry about that!) and the subsequent "Flight of the Wild Geese". Some 14,000 Irishmen, led by Sarsfield, opted for service in the French Army. In 1693 Sarsfield fell at the battle of Landen — fighting against his old enemy, William of Orange. His last words (we are told) as he looked at the blood pouring from his wounds, were: "Would to God that this were shed for Ireland". (Rest in peace, Patrick. They are still shedding it — "for Ireland").

The title, Earl of Lucan, seems to have lapsed during the century that followed. When the coronet and ermine robes were again taken out of mothballs, the title was bestowed on a fellow called Charles Bingham. This was in 1795. How did Charles Bingham get the Earldom of Lucan, a hundred years after Sarsfield's death? Quite simple really. Bingham's great-grandmother (who was married to Patrick Sarsfield's brother) was the daughter of a liaison between King Charles II and one of his whores. And the Binghams have had the title ever since.

Which brings us to another and more topical chapter in the story of the Sarsfields. Richard John Bingham, 41, the present Earl of Lucan, and spiritual figurehead of the Sarsfield Cumann of Fianna Fail, is at this moment wanted by Scotland Yard for the brutal murder of his children's nurse.

With blood pouring from her head, a woman burst into the bar of the Plumber's Arms, in Belgravia, London. "He's in the house!" she screamed. "The children are in the house. He's murdered the nanny!"

The date was November 7th, 1974. The woman was Veronica, Countess of Lucan. And it was the start of one of Britain's most sensational murder hunts. For the man accused of battering nanny Sandra Rivett to death is Richard John Bingham, the seventh Earl of Lucan.



The missing earl was "convicted" in his absence later at the most extraordinary inquest in British legal history. Right from the start the call went out to policemen all over the country: Find Lord Lucan. But despite a search that was eventually extended worldwide, Lord Lucan, known as "Lucky" for his gambling exploits, was not found.

An Old Etonian with a playboy image, Lucan was one of the leading lights of the upper-crust London jet-set. But behind the facade lay tragedy. "Lucky" was struggling to pay massive gambling debts. His marriage had broken down and he had left the family home in Lower Belgravia Street to live in a bachelor flat. And the Lucans were involved in a costly legal battle for custody of their three children — Lady Frances, Lord Bingham, and Lady Camilla.

One theory put forward was that Lucan had returned to the family home in Belgravia to create the impression that a burglar had broken in and with the intention of killing his wife — and that in the darkness he had mistaken Sandra Rivett for the Countess.

Some people have suggested that Lucan is himself dead. Sandra Rivett's mother, when questioned about this theory, is quoted as saying: "I hope he is dead, and rotting in hell".

The Chairman of the Sarsfield Cumann of Fianna Fail is Captain Bill Treacy of Aer Lingus. He should have as good a chance as anyone of spotting the surreptitious flight of this particular Wild Goose.

In the meantime, Senator Russell, don't complain so much about a few posters. You're still ALIVE, aren't you?

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EVERY MONTH**

# LONDON LETTER

BY ARTHUR LA BERN

SOMEBODY should write a History of Hunger Strikes in English Prisons. There would be a voracious public for it.

That talented biographer Mr. Roy Jenkins could make an excellent job of it. He would approach the task with sympathy, understanding and 'inside' knowledge.

The latest hunger striker to bring wrinkles to our Home Secretary's usually bland brow was not an Irishman, for a change, but a patriotic, true blue Englishman who had been imprisoned under the Race Relations Act for advertising that his house was for sale to an English family only.

Now that was an extremely foolish thing for Mr. Robert Relf to do because, apart from landing him in the nick, he might have suffered the misfortune of actually selling his pad to a typical English family, like Mr. and Mrs. Andy Capp for instance. In which case he would still be waiting to see the colour of their money and that is not a pun. And I hope nobody is going to suggest that Mr. and Mrs. Capp are not typically English.

Seriously, I don't think Mr. Jenkins need lose any sleep over Mr. Relf's hunger strike. This racist offender is taking liquids. Many of my friends have lived to a ripe old age on an exclusively liquid diet. (Since I wrote this, a judge has let Mr. Relf out, though Mr. Relf has not apologised).

In fact, I don't see why Mr. Jenkins should lose any sleep over any hunger striker.

He should take a leaf out of a predecessor's book, Mr. Reginald McKenna. Reggie was a good chap. He rowed for Cambridge in 1887 and used to cut quite a smooth oar at Henley when Henley was Henley. He wasn't only a sportsman. He was a scholar and a gentleman. Just the type to go far in British politics in those days.

Reggie was Liberal M.P. for North Monmouthshire from 1895 to 1918. He was successively president of the Board of Education, First Lord of the Admiralty, Home Secretary and Chancellor of the Exchequer. And he reaped the reward of this glorious political career by being made Chairman of the Midland Bank, a high-domed elder statesman in stiff, butterfly wing collar in one of the most cherished seats of Mammon from 1919 until 1943 when he died at the age of eighty still clinging to office.

It is not his career in banking that we are concerned with here, but his imaginative way of dealing with those misguided ladies, the Suffragettes, when they refused to take their nourishing and admonishing porridge!

One of them, a Miss Killian Lenton, had struggled with a doctor and seven wardresses in Holloway's pretty, castle-like gaol, when they were trying to force feed her. In the struggle her lung was penetrated, pleurisy set in, the authorities panicked and discharged her — 'in imminent danger of death'.

It so happened the young lady recovered, but an M.P. moved a resolution to reduce Reggie McKenna's salary by £100 because of incompetence and lack of firmness.

Seven wardresses and a doctor struggling with one defenceless woman does not exactly suggest a lack of firmness. However, something had to be done.

Lord Robert Cecil suggested that these obstinate ladies should be deported. (Where?) Only that crackpot Keir Hardy suggested that they should be given the vote. This of course was unthinkable and the ex-rowing blue, banker-to-be at the Home Office came up with a brilliant piece of legislation.

Arthur La Bern was born in London of French parents. As a journalist, he worked for the *Evening News*, *Evening Standard*, *Daily Mirror* and *Daily Mail*. During the last war, he was a war correspondent in the Far East, and also flew with the Fleet Air Arm in the Pacific. He has written biographies of George Smith, the Brides in the Bath murderer, and of Haigh, the Acid Bath murderer. His novel, *It Always Rains on Sunday*, was filmed and another later novel was filmed by Hitchcock as *Frenzy*. He is at present researching a biography of Robert Emmet. Arthur La Bern is an independent socialist, an opponent of Provo policies and a friend of working-class Ireland.

He called it the Prisoners (Temporary Discharge for Ill-Health) Bill. Under this Bill hunger strikers would be discharged when they became seriously ill. Then as soon as they recovered they were to be arrested again and the whole grisly performance would begin all over again. On April 25th, 1913, the Bill received Royal Assent. Not surprisingly, it was called the Cat and Mouse Bill. What was surprising was that 15 Labour MP's voted for the Bill.

For all I know it is still on the Statute Book for Mr. Jenkins to invoke should the tranquility of the bosky dells of English prisons and the peace of mind of their humane custodians ever again be jeopardised.

\* \* \* \* \*

My *Daily Express* tells me that Bernie Cornfeld, the deposed President of Investors Overseas Services, has made an honest woman of seven-months-pregnant Lorraine Armbruster by marrying the girl.

The question that occurs to me is: Will Lorraine make an honest man of Bernie?

\* \* \* \* \*

Truth in Advertising Department. I don't know whether the new Double Amplex advertisement has reached the Republic of Ireland yet, but it is worth quoting:

"Are you saying one thing while your breath says another? I just snatched a sandwich for lunch, C.J."

Under a cartoon of a man goggle-eyed over his lunch, with a sommelier pouring the wine, we are told that one capsule of Double Amplex will mask the traces of a 12-year-old Scotch, conceal the aroma of your favourite Havana and dissipate the aftermath of the most imaginative Italian cooking. In other words, the unacceptable breath of Capitalism?

But there is no reason why the appeal should be restricted to businessmen. Politicians should be buying them by the gross if the following claim is true:— 'One capsule will help you substantiate even the most elaborate deceit'.

No Cabinet Minister should be without them. They should be made available in the House of Commons bar forthwith.

\* \* \* \* \*

Denials Department:

A man has died of rabies in a Manchester hospital. It is not true that he was bitten by 'Field Marshal' Amin.

It is not true that Lord Wigg has proposed marriage to Lady (Teeth 'N' Smiles) Forkbender. What he proposed was something entirely different.

It is not true that Lord (Lewd) Grade wanted to change the title of his film about Jesus to "Crucifixion Street" because he thought it was more commercial.

Lord Bernstein would have objected. He owns 'Coronation Street'.